APRIL 1952

CPAC Newsletter

Business area: too many cars in too little space

Part of the ills of modern cities can be best described as a result of crowding too many people into too little space. And a chief reason that businessmen and public officials now have to worry about the central business area is that this area now has too many cars, trucks and other transport vehicles competing for too little space.

The problem can be traced to the way in which cities, particularly in North America, have grown. Competition for favorable downtown sites pushed land values up; it became more profitable, in fact almost necessary, to crowd buildings closer together and eventually to point them to the sky. But this brought an increasing number of persons and vehicles into the heart of the city. The problem was complicated by the fact that streets were not designed to carry the traffic that was generated. More and more people owned cars and most of them wanted to drive to work or to shop. In either case they wanted a place to park. The downtown area simply couldn't take the load. Business suffered since persons finding no place to park were tempted to try somewhere else. Suburban shopping and entertainment outlets prospered.

Surrounding the central area there generally could be found a zone of blight. Assessment was high, so were taxes. People moved out but the city, needing more revenue, could hardly lower taxes.

Suburbs expanded rapidly. The desire for more living space, the use of automobiles, the overcrowding of older areas, the spread of industry and the usually lower taxes all fostered suburban growth.

Unfortunately such growth was ill-suited to the smooth functioning of the community. Cars which were supposed to make travelling easier were of doubtful benefit. The suburbanite either fought his way through jammed streets to his destination, or joined his fellow strap hangers.

Transportation is an important aspect of city planning. It is a link between homes, workplaces, shops and recreation areas. As Guy Greer puts it: "Transportation, in the broadest sense of the term, comes close to being the root problem of all matters connected with living and making a living". Transportation can only be efficient and pleasant if the whole problem of city growth and land use is considered in relation to it. There is little point in building bigger roads if it merely induces more persons to use them. This is another way of saying that we must be strategic in outlook. The piecemeal approach is not good enough.

The general problem in the downtown areas is one of redevelopment. For the city as a whole it is one of redistributing densities so that (1) interior congestion is eased yet the central area remains the focal point of city life, (2) suburban growth is kept orderly and compact. Some persons feel that we must set limits to city size. The most immediate problem is that of the central area. The community has a big investment in this area and it can be protected only by prompt and resolute action. More space is required for almost everything. There must be space for the loading and unloading of trucks, space to park cars and space to provide easy access for people and vehicles.

—continued on page 2

COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA, OTTAWA

Business area (*Cont'd*)

Some authorities warn that this may *not* be a worthwhile solution. They argue that by providing more parking space and better streets, we simply encourage more people to use their cars. Persons with this point of view sometimes argue that cars should be prohibited in the central area, or at least in the busiest business district; and that greater use should be made of public transit which could carry more persons at less cost.

Numerous approaches are possible. Most cities have found that it is essential to distinguish the long term parker from the person who needs parking space for only a short period. Short-term parking can be provided in off-street lots, underground garages, multiple storey garages or at the curb. It is needed primarily in the central area and it has often been found that high land values make it difficult for private enterprise to provide such facilities.

The long-term parker, usually the person employed in the central business district, could be provided for by a series of lots on the perimeter of the business district. It isn't much of a hardship for him to walk a few blocks and if open space must be restricted, it must be given over to the most essential need. That is usually for short-term parking space.

Curb parking could be permitted for quick purchases but there is a growing feeling that such a practice should not be permitted during peak traffic hours.

There are different means of attacking the problem and different views on who should do it. Some favour private action, others argue that public action is necessary. Some want a combination. Usually there must be some public action since the city is in a legal position to acquire suitable property and finance parking lots. It might delegate responsibility for the operation of such lots to a private authority.

Other suggestions have been made and many have been tried in an effort to speed the movement of goods and people throughout urban areas. Street widening and one-way streets are examples. The separation of through and local traffic by means of by-pass highways is now common. Curvilinear street design and the provision of footpaths offer a few fortunate pedestrians some added protection—and peace.

In suburban communities, off-street parking is often provided by the large newer business establishments.

But more efficient transportation depends to a large degree upon effective control over the use of land by public authority. Even then there will be difficulties. Living habits change and transportation may easily change. The curing of past ills will take time—and money. But effective land use planning at least narrows the margin of error considerably.

Press Digest

Big growth will pose problems

The population of the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia will swell to 1,500,000 within fifty years and will create a nightmare of administrative problems unless the present municipal units prepare for this now. This prediction was made by the staff of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board in a report presented to municipalities that contribute to the Board's work.

Such a growth might deplete the present food supply by the process of building on what is now farm land, strangle traffic arteries, and create problems which would be too much for individual towns to solve for themselves.

The planning board outlined a program which it would undertake if municipal councils in the area endorsed its recommendations. The board would:

(a) undertake specific studies on airports, parks and rural zoning in collaboration with other bodies;

(b) ask municipalities to make a study of the need for some form of metropolitan and valley government;

(c) ask the provincial government to prepare subdivision control legislation, undertake a land conservation program and carry out an economic survey of the region.

Peter Oberlander, a consultant to the Board, says that where before the Second World War 64 out of every 100 people on the lower mainland lived in Vancouver, now only 54 live in the city. Thus future growth will likely be spread out over the whole area and create problems which are regional in scope.

Continued Support from CCA

Meeting in Toronto at their annual convention, Canadian Construction Association delegates passed a number of important resolutions.

Community Planning: They advised long-term planning to achieve and maintain reasonable standards of housing and community development through provision of adequate governmental planning controls, personnel and facilities especially at the local level. They urged continued support of the work of the Community Planning Association of Canada.

Housing: Minimum national target for '52 should be from 100,000 to 125,000 units. Advocated continued efforts to reduce housing costs through greater individual productivity, more cost-conscious design, on-site assembly line construction.

Building Codes: Demanded more standardization and modernization of building bylaws by the provinces and municipalities, using the National Building Code as a guide, to make for greater efficiency and lower costs . . . in the housing field particularly.

Too much traffic

Traffic tie-ups are not unusual in most Canadian cities and downtown parking space is similarly at a premium but New York City outdoes all rivals. The *Times* says that in the commercial centre—the nine square miles south of Sixtieth street—traffic "is slowing New York to an oxcart pace." The reasons:

Every working day 3,750,000 persons pour into that area.
Into its 270 miles of streets come 380,000 automobiles, trucks and buses.
Altogether, including those already there, about 500,000 vehicles are in the area every day—or about 185 for every crosstown block.

Traffic congestion costs New York business an estimated $1,000,000 a day. Trucks use $75,000,000 worth of gasoline a year just looking for parking space.

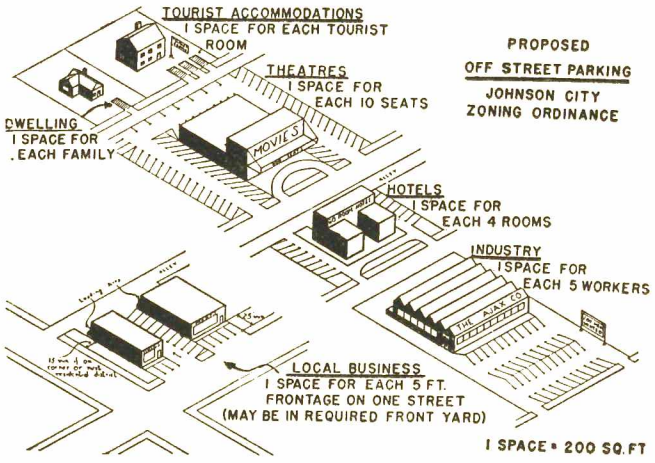
Businessmen want downtown congestion eased

Businessmen in downtown Vancouver are convinced that more open land must be provided for parking if the downtown area is to stay in healthy financial shape. There are enough people coming in to the central area who are potential customers, but for too many of them, there is no place to park a car. Furthermore, streets are clogged with automobiles, trucks and transit vehicles.

Through the Downtown Business Association, parking lots have been made available and more are planned. But the shop owners think that this will only provide part of the remedy. The Association has asked that every encouragement be given to office and commercial buildings and manufacturing firms to provide loading and unloading space off the street, and it has asked that public and office buildings be required by law to provide parking space for clients and tenants.

In nearby New Westminster the problem is much the same. Board of Trade members there have suggested that the $25,000 annual take from parking meters be earmarked to finance public parking lots. Some city councillors thought this should be a job for private enterprise.

Zoning for Off-Street Parking



Newer business establishments can usually provide parking space for their customers. But businessmen in the downtown, built-up area have a tougher problem. There is less room, and the price of land is generally higher. Above is a suggested standard for Johnson City, Tennessee. Downtown merchants there requested a survey and planners recommended the above standard.

Traffic and parking trends

To cure the traffic strangulation plaguing all urban places, more and more cities in the U.S.A. turned to positive action during 1951. They found that better vehicular control measures, provision of off-street parking and loading spaces, greater use of meters, construction of express highways to by-pass through traffic and urban redevelopment are all parts of the treatment for curing ills attacking the central areas.

To establish off-street parking facilities more cities turned to using receipts collected from street meters as a means of financing. While this trend is more widespread, off-street parking will be extensive. Parking authorities with powers to assemble land, to issue bonds, and to construct facilities are also being established in the trend toward dealing with the parking problem.

Less traffic — more business

Cities which have been by-passed through the rerouting of main highways stand to gain in business volume. This at least is the experience in California where the American Society of Planning Officials conducted a study of five such cities.

A typical case is North Sacramento. There, some 224 retail stores lined the four-mile main business street, which also served as a highway for cross-state traffic. In 1947, a freeway, by-passing this section of the road, was completed. Almost overnight, street congestion disappeared as traffic dropped 44%.

But while traffic dropped, business boomed. North Sacramento merchants in stores along the former highway increased their sales by 48.5% in a two year period compared to a country-wide jump of 27%.

Canadian experience seems to be similar. Towns in Ontario that bitterly opposed being by-passed by provincial highways 25 years ago are now asking the Ontario Highways Department to take highways out of town and leave the streets free for local traffic.

A bargain is of no importance

Twenty newspapers in the U.S.A. recently took part in a Seminar on "Defense Impacts on our Cities and States." The participants discussed: How are material and manpower shortages affecting the cities and states?; Impacts of industrial dispersal; the 'critical area'; How can essential services be financed in a defense period?

During the seminar, C. H. Lang, vice-president of the General Electric Company, was asked—"How important is a bargain to General Electric" (the reference was to free or cheap buildings, tax exemptions, etc.); Replied Mr. Lang: "A bargain is of no importance whatsoever to General Electric." The Company, he continued, wants to carry its proper share of the cost of municipal services and is much more concerned with handling suitable community amenities than it is with any concessions that a community might make.

The seminar was sponsored by the Public Administration Clearing House of Chicago.

Business is better in the suburbs

Perhaps it is because downtown areas are too congested, but suburbanites are now spending more money in suburban stores. The Regional Plan Association of New York conducted a survey of the New York area and their research shows that retail sales in the entire suburban area for the past twenty years increased over 60%. In the same period, volume of Manhattan retail sales did not show any increase.

More people are living in the suburbs, of course; but it is easier to find parking space and more convenient to shop nearer home.

Downtown business men are aware of this. They realize that it is no use having big stores and good quality goods if there is no place for people to park. They are therefore among the leaders in asking for action on—off street parking, adequate zoning, and proper *city-wide* planning.

Transit expert urges more parking curbs

Vancouver should step up a campaign to keep parked cars off downtown streets and it should institute more one-way traffic routes. This was the advice of U.S. traffic expert Col. M. O. Mills, who was asked to study Vancouver's transit service and make recommendations.

"We are finding all down the Pacific Coast that the congestion in the downtown areas is driving the buying public into the suburban shopping areas. By making it easier for transit vehicles and automobiles to move through the downtown district, it will encourage more people to make the trip."

Col. Mills apparently did not suggest where the cars could stop and park to allow occupants to shop.

—continued on page four

Press Digest

Try to protect land surrounding Calgary

The Calgary District Planning Commission is preparing a general plan for the future development of the rural area surrounding the city. Five local authorities, all of which are represented on the Commission, have been asked to apply to the provincial government for an interim development order.

If this is done, all zoning bylaws presently in effect will be suspended. A general plan will be prepared and new bylaws drawn up. The interim order would permit the different municipalities to refuse permission for development which might clash with the new plan.

Thus while each local unit would be responsible for development in its own area, they would be guided by the general plan for the whole area, and this general plan would complement that of the city of Calgary.

The success of such a scheme appears to rest to a large extent upon the distribution of tax sources (*i.e.*, industry) among the different units. If one or more of the participants feels that it is not getting enough revenue, then it will probably be reluctant to prohibit development that would aid it financially even if this were contrary to the general plan. Yet one area may be most suitable for industrial development. Can a fair solution be found? It is important to the Calgary district and important to other metropolitan areas faced with similar problems.

How will Oakville handle industry?

The new Ford plant in Oakville which will eventually employ about 4,000 workers is expected to treble the population of that area. This means plenty of problems. The biggest are in the field of land use.

The people of the Oakville-Trafalgar area cannot complain of not being warned. Rhys M. Sale, Ford President, told them that 'careful conscientious planning and cautious controls should make it possible to capitalize on all the advantages and minimize the disadvantages'. He suggested that zoning bylaws and building codes should provide adequate space for workers' homes, gardens, playgrounds and convenient schools and hospitals.

The Toronto *Globe and Mail* has warned that restrictive bylaws won't do the job properly, that positive land use control is needed.

Toronto planner E. G. Faludi thinks that one of the most serious problems will be the big increase in automobile traffic. "The workers will need their beer," remarked Mr. Faludi, and "this means that 1,000 cars will be driving into Oakville every night at five o'clock." But the possible pub rush is only one of the problems. Right now an even bigger one is looming. That is the effect of land speculation. If it goes too far, it will be very difficult to get a rational land pattern, and it may force up the price of homes, thereby making it difficult to provide housing for workers.

Gordon Culham, who is planning consultant to the Oakville-Trafalgar Planning Board, warns officials there that if they want compact and orderly development, they should see that fringe land is held in reserve for public purposes.

Underlying most of the problems is an unresolved question affecting land ownership. Property owners feel that they should be able to do what they want with their holdings. This isn't always in the public interest. But if controls over the use of land are not agreed on, then Oakville-Trafalgar could easily follow the pattern that has become customary in too many towns. This pattern means unwise land use, ribbon development, traffic congestion, inflated land values and a generally uneconomic growth. The situation around Oakville has parallels in other parts of Canada. That is why there will be a good deal of interest in how it is resolved. There is still time for the Oakville community to take positive measures—but it must be done soon.

Three Rivers looks to the future

Architect-planner Langston of Montreal has completed a general plan for the city of Trois-Rivières. He conceives a future city divided into three major industrial sections—one for heavy industry; one for lighter industry and business and a third in the area now being developed by International Paper and Canada Iron. Houses and shops would be located between these three areas with schools and churches conveniently placed. The Montreal planner advanced suggestions as to a suitable traffic system which would provide easy access between home, work, shops and recreation areas. His general plan includes provision for playgrounds, parks and other open spaces; elimination of the smoke nuisance and suggestions as to how it can be financed. Mr. Langston sees a possible future population of 200,000 persons. His general plan covers a 50-year period but is broken down into 10-year programs.

Moncton sets example

One of the chief factors in complicating the planning problems for a city and surrounding municipalities is the lack of uniform zoning and subdivision control bylaws. The Town Planning Commission of the Greater Moncton Area now reports that it has resolved this problem. A zoning bylaw and a subdivision control bylaw have been adopted by all five municipalities in the area. Such a move is a tribute to the commission, which has a good record in keeping the public informed about its work. Planning, like most things, has to be sold if it is to be effective. In Moncton, at least, this lesson has been learned.

Calls for Maritime development

E. W. George, New Brunswick M.P., said in the House of Commons that the Federal Government should take the initiative in the development of power and navigation projects in the Maritimes. The projects could be considered an extension of the St. Lawrence Seaway principle to the Maritimes.

Mr. George spoke in moving the traditional motion for adoption of an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

During debate on the Seaway at the previous session, Maritime members expressed support of the Seaway scheme but several of them said that it should be but a part of an overall resource development program.

Should Rebuild City Centre

"It takes real vision, hard thinking and careful planning to tear out the bowels of an old city and replace it with more suitable living quarters," says J. E. Rutledge, M.P.P. for Halifax Centre. But, continued Mr. Rutledge, "from my own observation, I have no doubts about it, a lot of this city is run down." The Halifax member told the Nova Scotia legislature that he would like to see an agreement for the construction of new houses through a three government action as provided for under Section 35 of the National Housing Act. He cited remarks made recently by CPAC speakers before the Rotary Club that 5,000 additional houses were needed in Halifax.

Wants industry for Maritimes

Mr. Rutledge also asked the Province to confer with Federal Government leaders to try and agree on a program of industrial dispersal. He said that too much industry was being concentrated in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes area of central Canada.

Get park sites now, says architect

H. H. G. Moody, a Winnipeg architect and member of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, predicted that Winnipeg would continue to grow—and that meant more park sites would be needed to serve more people. He urged city fathers to acquire property *now* for future park sites, before available land was all taken.

MODERN UTOPIA

by Bruce Hutchison

Ottawa *Citizen*, February 19, 1952

. . . The writer of this column has lately been enjoying the high American standard of living. I shall tell you how this standard of living works in fact, not how it works in statistics.

The place where I have been staying outside New York is said to have the highest living standard in the entire world. It is inhabited by a gold-plated tycoonery quite unknown to our simple lives. It is the last happy hunting ground of the millionaire. How I should happen to den up here for a long weekend is another story and a grim one. Suffice it to say that for three days I have been living in fabulous luxury. I have seen the high standard in the flesh.

That is to say, the rich New Yorker who is the envy of the entire world arises at about 6 a.m. and hurries through his breakfast. He is then driven some ten miles along slippery roads and through the heavy traffic of various towns to the nearest railway station.

Here he is jostled by the cranky morning crowds on a cold, windswept and dirty railway platform while gigantic trains, half a mile long, flick by, at least one a minute. Finally his own train stops and he is swept inside by a stampede of angry commuters, all with a high standard of living, a stomach ulcer and a harassed look. One is lucky to get a seat on the train and sit there for an hour and ten minutes while it wallows into the Grand Central.

The Grand Central at about 9 a.m. presents a sight very much, I imagine, like the buffalo herds of the Canadian prairies before the white man arrived, except that these herds are in a greater hurry. Only an experienced half-back can buck this line.

But if one survives, this is by no means the end of the journey. Now the high standard man descends with swarms of his own kind down dark and unclean passages into the bowels of the earth where, out of a black tunnel, roars the subway train, pauses for half a minute with open doors and then, swallowing up its passengers as a whale swallows herring, is off again with deafening sound through the bored rock of Manhattan Island.

Thus about two hours after leaving home the high standard man finally staggers into his office to begin work. At 5 p.m. he repeats the same process in reverse and after a quick bite of dinner collapses into bed to prepare himself for the same carefree life next day.

Statistically this is the highest living standard the world has ever known. It involves a gigantic use of goods in great houses, in automobiles, railways, subways, elevators and every imaginable gadget to save men's labour. Never has so much labour been saved before in any single part of the earth's surface. Never have people toiled so hard to avoid work. Statistically, never have they had it so good. Never has so much money been owned and spent. And never have any people had so little to show for their money.

When I hear statisticians prove by indubitable figures that the living standard of Canada is lower than that of the United States I shall remember my lost weekend in Connecticut. When I hear my friends tell me they are poor in Ottawa, I shall advise them to sample just for one day the opulence of the millionaire's paradise on the outskirts of New York. When I hear of young men leaving this country to secure the larger rewards of a richer civilization I shall not try to stop them. They will find out the truth for themselves. When I encounter my next statistician I shall kill him as painlessly as possible before he can spread any more of his accurate figures which turn the truth upside down.

Now this is written very early in the morning when no civilized man would be awake because, among the high standard people, breakfast is at 7 a.m. and therefore I have no time to elaborate an interesting and grisly theme beyond adding that, after my weekend on the high standard all I ask is the chance to get back to the low, back home. What a lovely sound that word has this morning as one prepares to ride on the high standard, clinging to a subway strap among the happy millionaires, into the richest and poorest city of men.

Traffic trouble

Two big planning problems—congested interior of cities, and unguided sprawl on the outskirts—are giving Canadian cities a headache.

Take Toronto as an example. Arterial highways on the outer fringes are not moving traffic quickly enough because of increasing residential and commercial development. In the downtown area it is a case of too many cars in too little space. There are 19,000 parking spaces in 600 downtown acres but that isn't enough. The city may now form a parking authority which would be able to expropriate property for use as parking space.

But some officials in Toronto think that the long term solution may be to forbid private cars in the downtown area. Planning Commissioner Tracy LeMay thinks that the Toronto Transportation Commission could do the job more economically.

Automobiles are the problem

Ottawa's snarled traffic situation can be solved only by operating on the downtown area of the city, said Norman D. Wilson, Toronto transportation consultant, in a report to the Ottawa City Council. Eventually a part of a central block should be cleared and used for parking, declared Mr. Wilson. He attributed traffic problems to a lack of off-street parking space.

A study of traffic conditions in the United States shows that average American cities have parking space for only 40% to 60% of the automobiles that enter the downtown areas.

Housing Highlights

Ontario to increase housing aid

Planning and Development Minister Griesinger of Ontario has introduced legislation which it is hoped will encourage the supply of more housing and provide more rental accommodation.

The proposals include:

1. Taking over the present municipal responsibility for 7½ per cent of the cost of low rental houses under three government partnership.
2. Amendment to the Housing Development Act to give the Planning Department the power to expropriate land in many communities where subdivided or serviced land is not readily available.
3. Provision for industrial participation in housing projects along with the federal-provincial partners. This may be applied in Oakville, says the *Globe and Mail*.
4. Added powers for expropriation of deteriorated areas of urban centres with a view to redevelopment by private or public enterprise.
5. A Crown corporation to make loans for farm mortgages to be known as the Rural Housing Finance Corporation.

But the most radical feature of the legislation was Mr. Griesinger's announcement that on rental projects, "the Dominion and the province are prepared to relate rents to income, subject to a rental floor which will limit any losses to be borne by the two governments."

Produce houses 'a thousand at a time'

Harold Fishleigh, a Toronto M.L.A. whose business is real estate, says that through proper planning and government assistance, the Toronto area could have 30,000 houses within two years. How? By mass production of housing units a thousand at a time. The reason this isn't being done, said Mr. Fishleigh, is because municipalities on the fringe of Toronto will not release the needed land.

"The municipalities want industry, not housing," he continued. "Every time you build 500 homes you need a school and schools are expensive these days. It may be necessary for the province to take over education in certain municipalities, as well as finance the cost of services, particularly water and sewers."

Toronto's Board of Control says it will ask suburban communities for sites on which to construct up to 1,000 housing units under three government financing terms.

Small Towns can also have Public Housing

"Public housing can be undertaken by small towns in the Dominion as well as the larger cities, if the governments can agree," P. R. Fowler, executive secretary of the Saint John Planning Commission, told members of the Nova Scotia Division and Halifax Branch of CPAC at their March meeting in the Lord Nelson Hotel.

Mr. Fowler outlined a survey which has been conducted in Saint John. The purpose was to designate areas for redevelopment. In this case, new construction will be in the form of public housing and will affect more than 1,000 families over a five year period. A similar survey has been proposed for Halifax.

Mr. Fowler believes that every city across Canada should be interested in slum clearance and public housing. He pointed out that in such projects as in Saint John, money paid out will be fully repaid in time by taxation.

CPAC LOGBOOK

The P.E.I. Division has named the mayors of the six incorporated towns of the province and the commissioners of three incorporated villages, as honorary members. Here is the list: Percy Boudreault, Georgetown; Bruce Yeo, Montagne; C. R. Lavie, Souris; Willard Leard, Borden; Waldron Darrack, Kensington; C. R. Profitt, Alberton; Edwin Cook, Parkdale; Brent Wood, Crapaud; Alton Raynor, O'Leary.

Two more public meetings of interest have been held by the Nova Scotia Division and Halifax Branch. Murray McKay told them about the new bridge linking Halifax and Dartmouth and P. R. Fowler of Saint John spoke on slum clearance and redevelopment. (See above). City Council has acted on CPAC recommendation on recreation and it has received an outline of minimum housing standards prepared by CPAC. N.S. secretary Mrs. Toward says that open discussion on this was lively . . . it took a fire in the hotel to stop it. . . . Phil Dumaresq spoke on low rental housing on a Labour Forum broadcast, expects to repeat the performance.

'The province of Quebec has a character all of its own' is a frequent remark. CPAC's Quebec Division has decided to build their annual general meeting around the theme 'Quebec's heritage'. They will convene in the Richelieu region beginning May 24th and will make a first-hand case study of that region.

'Quebec City of tomorrow' was the theme of a three-week exhibition put on by the Quebec City branch.

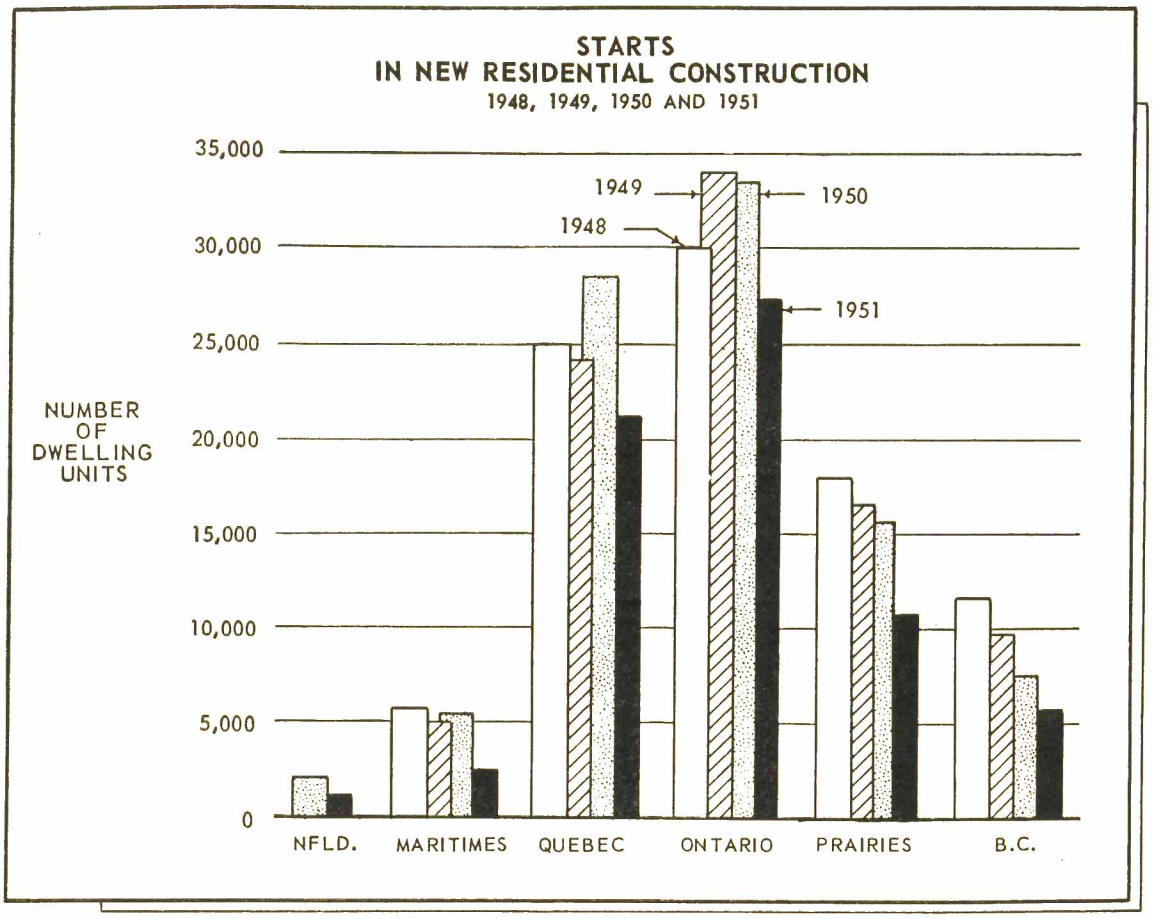
New branches have been formed at Sherbrooke and Beloeil.

The Ontario Division has resumed publication of a 'Housing and Planning Digest' . . . reports sponsoring a lecture on prefabricated houses by Prof. Burnham Kelly of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. U. of Toronto's School of Architecture and the Institute of Professional Town Planners co-operated. . . . Secretary Paul Ringer visited Timmins and Porcupine and spoke to Council and Planning Board members there.

Manitoba has its hands full getting ready for two big events in May. Community Planning Week begins on May 19th, while during that week (May 21 and 22) Winnipeg will be the site of CPAC's first Prairie Regional Planning Conference.

From Calgary, George Brown informs us that there have been regular public meetings held in that city and also in Edmonton. Public interest is particularly important in Alberta, where advanced planning legislation is in force.

Victoria, B.C. was the site of the third regional conference sponsored by the B.C. division since the fall. . . CPAC is sending a questionnaire to municipal and town planning officials throughout the province. There is talk of sponsoring a one or two-week 'Planning Institute' at the University of British Columbia for these officials.



Dominion Bureau of Statistics

Year's Housing Reviewed: Policy Change Hinted

For the first time since the war, the volume of houses built in Canada has declined. A review of the factors affecting the amount of housebuilding in this country for 1951 appears in the Annual Report of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to Resources Minister Winters.

During 1951 about 72,000 dwellings were started. This is a 24% decline from the previous year.

Competing claims on materials, labour and investment money made some cut in house building a matter of deliberate choice, but there were other factors which helped account for the slowdown.

David B. Mansur, CMHC President, who presented the report on behalf of the Board of Directors of the corporation, names four main difficulties met last year as—"a shortage of mortgage funds . . . of serviced land . . . larger down payment requirements . . . and the increased level of debt service."

The report warns that the supply of mortgage funds under present arrangements places a definite limit on the number of houses that we can build. "If, for social reasons," we want the annual housing programme to be as great or greater than in 1949 and 1950, then "it may prove necessary to find additional sources of credit to be made available for mortgages on new residential construction."

But a greater supply of mortgage money is not in itself a guarantee that enough houses will be built. Higher construction costs and larger down payment and debt service requirements make it difficult for many persons to buy a home. Then too, local taxes continue to increase. This increase, according to the report, averages 30% over the past three years. The individual now needs an annual income of $3300 to meet monthly payments on a new minimum house. In 1950 he needed only $2700.

Builders also had a difficult year. The shortage of serviced land was a major obstacle. A number of municipalities wanted the builder to pay for land service costs and recover this in the selling price of the house. Many builders said that this higher price would be "beyond the means of the average prospective home buyer."

Some local governments were not anxious to have houses at all. For every 100 houses they would have to provide four or five new classrooms—or operate the schools in shifts as is being done in several places.

To add to his frustration, the builder often found that he could not count on having a pumping and sewage plant if his houses were in a suburban area without such a plant, and where the central plant in the city was already overloaded.

Thus buyer, builder, local authority and lender have reason to feel that the roles they played together in Canadian community building since World War II have been developed to the limit.

If more housing is wanted, some new arrangements seem necessary. As the report states, more mortgage money is needed. Answers must be found also for the other obstacles encountered in 1951. A promising development is that offered by the partnership of federal, provincial and local governments in land development and housing schemes under Section 35 of the Housing Act. Nineteen such projects are under way in the country. These will result in the servicing of about 5,000 building lots and the construction of 380 subsidized low rental units and 1,185 economic rental units.

Toronto's Regent Park remains as the prime example of government aided slum clearance and redevelopment in Canada. The experience there should prove valuable in further undertakings of this nature.

COMING EVENTS

Ontario CPAC Annual Meeting: Joint annual meeting of the Ontario Division and Greater Toronto Branch of CPAC at the War Amputations Building, 62 Wellesley St. west, Toronto, Wednesday, May 28, 8 p.m. Inquire CPAC Ontario Secretary, 1175 Bay St., Toronto.

Heritage of Quebec: A two-day conference on May 24-25 in St. Jean, near Montreal. Case study of part of the Richelieu Valley area, annual general meeting of the Quebec Division. Inquire, CPAC Quebec Secretary, 14 St. James St. east, Montreal.

Nova Scotia Annual Meeting: Will convene in the Lord Nelson Hotel, Halifax, Tuesday, May 6th.

Prairie Regional Planning Conference: To be held in Winnipeg, May 21-22, Royal Alexandra Hotel. Inquire CPAC Manitoba Secretary, 223 Curry Building, Winnipeg. This is part of the program for Community Planning Week, May 19-24.

Conference on Social Work: 13th annual Canadian Conference on Social Work in Quebec City, June 19-24, Château Frontenac Hotel. Frances Morton of Baltimore will speak on citizen action for better housing.

Mayors Meet in Calgary: The annual conference of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities will be held in Calgary, June 30-July 3. Inquire George Mooney, Executive Director, Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal 2.

COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

President: W. Harold Clark (Toronto)
Chairman of Executive: Robert T. Donald
Executive Director: Alan H. Armstrong
Assistant Director: J. Ross Robertson

NATIONAL OFFICE:
169 Somerset St. West, Ottawa

DIVISIONAL OFFICES:

Nova Scotia.....42 Lucknow St., Halifax
Quebec.....14 St. James Street East, Montreal
187 St. Joseph Street, Quebec
Ontario.....1175 Bay Street, Toronto
Manitoba.....223 Curry Building, Winnipeg
Alberta.....640 Tenth St. N.W., Calgary
British Columbia.1205 - 736 Granville Street, Vancouver

The object of the Association is to encourage citizen interest in community planning. Active membership is $3.00 per year. Sustaining membership is $25.00 per year. Members receive the *CPAC Newsletter* or *Les Nouvelles de l'A.C.U.* each published eight times yearly, and the bilingual quarterly *Community Planning Review*. Members are encouraged to become active supporters of community planning in their community. Branches have been formed in several cities for this purpose.

PLANNER WANTED

The City of Kingston, Ont. Planning Board requires a Planner. Candidate should be a University graduate, particularly in engineering, with some specialization in planning.

Experience is not necessary and salary will depend on qualifications. Work will include consolidation and revision of the zoning by-laws, subdivisions, major street system and school sites.

Apply to Chairman, City of Kingston Planning Board, City Hall, Kingston, Ontario, stating salary acceptable and qualifications.

CPAC *Newsletter*

Published eight times a year. Subscription to non-members: $1.00 per annum.
Editor — Ross Robertson

Mr. Stewart Fyfe,
172 Wellington St.,
Kingston, Ont.

E528r

PUBLISHED BY COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA, 169 SOMERSET ST. W. OTTAWA CANADA